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## DOCUMENTS

### *Documents on the Blount Conspiracy, 1795-1797.*

THE following documents from the British Public Record Office, the Department of State at Washington, and the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris, illustrate the proposed attack upon the Spanish possessions of North America by frontiersmen and Indians expecting aid from Great Britain, to which the name Blount's Conspiracy is commonly given. For his connection with this affair, William Blount, senator from Tennessee, former governor of the Territory South of the Ohio, was expelled from the Senate. A brief sketch of the movement is given in the REVIEW for January, 1905, X, 272-274, with citation of the material. Further references are in the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1903*, II, especially the introduction, and pp. 840, 919, 990, 1015, 1048, 1068, 1075, 1079, 1091, 1098.

The so-called Blount Conspiracy must be considered in relation to the designs of France upon Louisiana; the attitude of the Tory settlers at Natchez and the retention of the Spanish posts upon the Mississippi<sup>1</sup>; England's war with Spain and her attitude toward the Mississippi valley from 1795 to 1798; Pitt's negotiations with Miranda, and the latter's overtures to Adams, Hamilton, etc.; and the critical relations of the United States with France during Adams's administration. The land speculations in New York and on the Mississippi are also related to the intrigue.

It is important to collate these documents with those in the trial of Blount: *Annals of Fifth Congress, 1797-1799*, I, 34-45, 448-466, 499 ff., 672-679; II, 2245-2416; see index to these volumes for speeches and legislative proceedings. Other important documents are in *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, II, 20-27, 66-77 (Blount's letter to Carey is on pp. 76-77), 78-103; King, *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II, 196-258, *passim*; Victor Collot, *Voyage dans l'Amérique Septentrionale* (2 vols., Paris, 1826), also in translation, *A Journey in North America* (Paris, 1826).

<sup>1</sup> Peter J. Hamilton, "Running Mississippi's South Line", *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, II, 157-168; G. L. Rives, "Spain and the United States in 1795", *AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*, IV, 62-79; F. L. Riley, "Spanish Policy in Mississippi after the Treaty of San Lorenzo", *Report of American Historical Association, 1897*, 175-192, and *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, I, 50-66; F. L. Riley, "Transition from Spanish to American Rule in Mississippi", *ibid.*, III, 261-311.

The documents from the archives of the Department of State were found and copied by the Bureau of Historical Research of the Carnegie Institution. I am indebted to Mr. C. F. Huth, graduate scholar in history in the University of Wisconsin, for assistance in preparing the annotations.

FREDERICK J. TURNER.

I. DUKE OF PORTLAND TO LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR SIMCOE.<sup>1</sup>

WHITEHALL 24<sup>th</sup> October 1795

*Sir,*

The conversations you had with Lord Grenville previous to your leaving England relative to the dispositions of the Settlers in Kentucky, and the Western Count[r]y of the Northern States, joined to your own knowledge of them render it quite unnecessary for me to point out either their connexions or interests, or the extent to which they may be made subservient to His Majesty's Service, should a rupture take place with Spain—an event which I sincerely trust may not happen, but which nevertheless admits too great a degree of possibility, not to require our being prepared to meet it with every advantage that can be placed on our side.

I am not, at this moment sufficiently apprized of the present sentiments of these Settlers or whether the jealousies which formerly subsisted between them and the Spanish Government relative to the Mississippi still continue to influence them in such a manner, as would be likely to animate them to an immediate cooperation with this Country, in case the event should take place, which I have mentioned. I am therefore desirous of being confidentially informed by you, in particular on this point, and of receiving your opinion of the effect to be produced against the Spanish Settlements in North America, by the means of such co-operation as I have supposed. In addition to which, I should also wish for your sentiments with respect to any other movements with which this measure may require to be connected.

You will clearly see for the present that no open or direct communication on the subject of this letter can be made, on our parts to the Settlers in question, that all that can be done (and *that* will require your utmost care and circumspection) is, to cultivate such an intercourse with the leading Men of those Settlements, as will be likely to give to this Country a facility and advantage in acting with them, if ever a proper occasion should occur, carefully observing not to give any umbrage, or cause of suspicion to Spain, and avoiding whatever can, in the smallest degree commit this Country with the Government of the United States or make His Majesty a Party to any attacks on the Spanish Settlements, should no circumstances arise which may call for them on our part.

<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, War Office (Colonial), Secret Entry Book. Duke of Portland. "Original drafts signed by him." Indorsed: "Lieut Governor Simcoe Most private and secret Sent in Cypher."

I forbear to call your attention to the assistance which, in the event I have supposed, may be afforded by the Southern and Western Indians, as, in communicating your sentiments to me, in consequence of what I have already stated, you will, of course include in any supposed measures, which occasion may call for, the Services which might be derived from the above description of Persons.

Some knowledge of such parts of Lake Michigan as form or facilitate a communication with the Mississippi, its boundaries, and the connection of its Inlets, in respect to what rate of Vessels or Crafts, they may admit, may be, eventually, very material, and if an opportunity should present itself for this purpose, which in carrying into execution the several provisions contained in Our Treaty with the United States, may very well be expected, you will of course take advantage of it and transmit me a proper Chart with observations.<sup>1</sup>

I am etc

PORLAND

## II. ROBERT LISTON TO LORD GRENVILLE.<sup>2</sup>

PHILADELPHIA 25 January 1797

To the War Department  
My Lord

A person of the name of Chisholm who has accompanied to Philadelphia some warriors and Tribes of Indians who live on the South West Boundary of the United States has informed me that there are settled amongst these Tribes from a Thousand to Fifteen Hundred White Inhabitants principally British Subjects, attached to their Country and Sovereign, and ready to enter into a plan for the Recovery of the

<sup>1</sup> A letter in Canadian Archives, Series Q, 282-2, p. 694, dated November 23, 1796, from W. Tatham (Latham?) contains this paragraph: "I dare boldly pronounce the fallacy of any reliance of Cooperation in the Countries of Kentucky and Territory South of Ohio in Conjunction with those of Upper Canada at the present juncture. Nay, I rather doubt a tendency to support the French in settling La. through many avenues and I advance this opinion founded upon twenty years acquaintance with the premises and with almost every man of enterprise they contain, but still more on a more intimate communication with the affairs of the American States and with Generals Lee, Scott, Clarke Shelly Sevier, Martin, Robertson Gunn and others to whom General Simcoe is well known, and with some one or more of whom (whose hour is not yet come) he, I believe is in intimate correspondence and high esteem."

George Rogers Clark alleged, in a letter of March 2, 1797, that English agents from Canada were in Kentucky to enroll volunteers destined to march against Louisiana, and that some days before he had received propositions to march at the head of two thousand men against New Mexico and had refused the offer. He did not believe the English could open the campaign before July. Their plan was, as he affirmed, to take St. Louis and then divide, one division to descend the Mississippi and the other to march against Santa Fé (Baron Marc de Villiers du Terrage, *Les Dernières Années de la Louisiane Française*, Paris, n. d. 1904, 362-363). See the REVIEW, X, 274, note.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, America 18.

Floridas to Great Britain<sup>1</sup> and that he is authorized to make, through me, an offer of their Services to His Majesty for that purpose. He represents the Settlers alluded to as being able with a slight degree of countenance and co-operation from Government, not only to drive the Spaniards from East and West Florida, but also to take possession of these Provinces when conquered. The Chief Conditions proposed are That His Majesty should legalize the above Enterprize by granting Commissions to a few of the Principal persons that might engage in it (which Commission however should not entitle them to pay or permanent Rank) That the British Government should send a Frigate and two or three armed Vessels with a few Field pieces to assist in making an attack on Mobile and Pensacola (if it were found necessary) and should furnish a Thousand Weight of Powder and two Thousand Weight [ ] and one Thousand Blankets for the Indians who may be willing to [engage] in the Expedition.

I shall enter more particularly into this Subject by the return of the November packet which I am in hourly expectation of seeing arrive in this Country.<sup>2</sup>

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, My Lord

Your Lordships, Most Obedient Humble Servant

ROB. LISTON

R<sup>t</sup> Honble Lord Grenville

### III. VICTOR COLLOT TO CARLOS MARTINEZ DE YRUJO.<sup>3</sup>

PHILADELPHIE, le 1<sup>er</sup> mars 1797.

Note remise au ministre de Sa Majesté Catholique par le général Collot relative à l'attaque de la Louisiane projetée par les Anglais.

Je considère la haute Louisiane dans son état actuel, ouverte de toute part, sans troupes, sans fortifications, le peuple inquiété, menacé par l'Angleterre, envié par les États-Unis, et dans un péril imminent ; et si elle est encore une possession de Sa Majesté Catholique, c'est parce qu'elle n'a pas été attaquée.

La haute Louisiane prise, la basse tombe nécessairement, et il ne faudra qu'un peu plus ou moins de tems ; car je ne connais pas un poste

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Ellicott, in his *Journal* (Philadelphia, 1803), 175, says, regarding one of the committees about Natchez, that "a plan was early formed, to add to the Union, the two Floridas, with the island of Orleans, provided the Spaniards either committed hostilities against the citizens of the United States at Natchez or joined France in the contest against us. From the secrecy, talents, and enterprise of those concerned, added to a temporary system of finance, and a deposit of arms, there could not possibly be any doubt of the complete, and almost instantaneous success of the plan had it been attempted."

<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant-governor Prescott, of Quebec, wrote to Liston, February 16, 1797, of the difficulty that would attend sending supplies for the proposed expedition against the Floridas unless the people of the United States favored the enterprise, or England still held the posts south of the Lakes. *Report on Canadian Archives*, 1891, "Lower Canada", 149. See his complaints, August 31, 1797, of Pickering's having made the matter public, *ibid.*, 155.

<sup>3</sup> Deciphered. Affaires Étrangères, États-Unis Correspondance, vol. 47, folios 126-129, in No. 11 of Adet. General Collot had returned from his investigations in the Mississippi in January. For his career see the references referred to in the introduction.

(je le démontrerai dans mon mémoire général) qui puisse tenir huit jours devant 2.000 hommes de bonnes troupes. La haute Loüisiane entre les mains de l'Angleterre ou des Américains ouvre la porte du Nouveau-Mexique en passant entre les rivières des *Osages* et des *Arkansas* où l'on ne trouve que de hautes futayes, des prairies naturelles et pas une seule rivière à traverser. Je sais qu'on traitera en Europe cette crainte de chimérique, d'idée gigantesque ; mais moi qui connais les lieux, le caractère entreprenant des peuples qui les habitent, et les pré- tendues difficultés que l'on suppose que l'ennemi trouvera, je répète que, si la haute Loüisiane tombe entre les mains des Anglais ou des Américains, S<sup>te</sup>-Fé sera pillé et ravagé la campagne suivante, parce que ces deux nations seront toujours d'accord, lorsqu'il s'agira de faire de l'argent et de dépoüiller Sa Majesté Catholique.

Je n'approuve donc pas par cette raison les enrolements qu'on propose au ministre ; ils coûteront des sommes immenses et on n'en tirera aucun parti. Ils seront même très dangereux, à moins qu'il n'y ait parmi eux beaucoup de Français ; d'ailleurs, les sauvages auront une répugnance invincible à agir avec eux, et les habitans encore plus.

Je pense donc que ce qu'il y a de plus important à faire dans une circonstance aussi fâcheuse, est d'employer tous les moyens possibles, sinon pour faire échoûer cette expédition, au moins pour la retarder.

Pour cela le ministre doit : 1<sup>o</sup> s'opposer de toutes ses forces à ce que les Anglais passent sur le territoire américain pour attaquer la haute Loüisiane. Pour cet effet, je crois qu'il ne doit pas se contenter de traiter cette affaire avec le secrétaire d'État, dont la fourberie est assés connue aux deux puissances alliées, mais encore avec le président des États-Unis. Voici pourquoi : c'est que s'il arrivait que, malgré les protestations dont cet homme est prodigue, le passage fût forcé, n'étant d'aucun poids par lui-même, le gouvernement en serait quitté pour le désavouier, le chasser même au besoin pour donner une apparente satisfaction au Roy d'Espagne, et la Loüisiane n'en serait pas moins perdue.

Les Américains maîtres aujourd'hui des postes ferment aux Anglais les trois principaux passages par lesquels ils pourraient déboucher des Lacs. Le premier en partant du Détroit, remontant la petite rivière des *Mimmis* [Miamis] pour gagner les sources de la *Wabach* et la descendre jusqu'au poste Vincennes pour de là arriver par terre aux Illinois à Kas- kasias par une très belle communication à travers un pays où on ne rencontre que des prairies naturelles.

Le second, en partant de *Michilimakinac*, passant par la baie des *Puans*,<sup>1</sup> remontant la rivière des *Sacsouhaux*<sup>2</sup>-River pour gagner par un portage de trois milles les sources de la rivière de *Ouisconsing* qui verse ses eaux dans le Mississippi.

Le 3<sup>ème</sup> en partant de *Michilimakinac*, descendant le lac *Michigan* jusqu'aux sources de la rivière des Illinois (ce qui se fait dans les grandes

<sup>1</sup> Green bay, Wisconsin.

<sup>2</sup> Sacs ou paux ? The Fox river.

eaux sans portage) pour suivre le cours de cette rivière jusques vis-à-vis S<sup>t</sup> Loüis.

Mais comme, indépendamment de ces trois passages fermés par la possession des forts américains, les Anglais pourraient néanmoins passer au dessus pour exécuter leurs desseins en rassemblant leurs forces sur le lac Supérieur et remontant la rivière *Coppe[r]mines* pour joindre par un petit portage la tête de la rivière *Vermillon* qui se jette dans celle de *Chippewa*, qui conduit au Mississippi, ou bien par là où est la baie du lac Supérieur, qui offre aussi un passage en remontant une des petites rivières du fond de cette baie, et joignant par un petit portage la tête de la rivière *Froide*, qui mène de même au Mississippi.

Le ministre d'Espagne doit, d'après cela, requérir le gouvernement américain d'établir des postes sur ces communications, ne fût-il [fussent-ils] que de 4 ou 5 hommes, ils suffiront pour constater la violation du territoire des États-Unis et leur ôter tout prétexte.

Les Anglais seront alors forcés de remonter jusqu'au lac des Bois pour gagner le territoire espagnol et la tête du Mississippi, leur ligne d'opérations sera allongée et ils perdront encore beaucoup de tems en raison des rapides, chutes et portages infinis dont toute cette partie est coupée.

Il est indispensable d'envoyer sans perdre de tems à S<sup>t</sup> Loüis un officier de génie à talent, toute cette province en étant dépourvue, pour mettre au moins hors d'insulte cette place ouverte de toutes parts, qui est la clef de la haute Loüisiane par sa position, et la facilité d'y former un bon camp retranché.

Faire approvisionner cette place par le Kentukey aussitôt qu'il sera possible, parce qu'elle sera le rendés-vous général des troupes de sauvages et le reste. Il faut d'ailleurs un tems infini pour tirer des vivres de la Nouvelle-Orléans, qui, en outre, serait certainement attaquée ou menacée en même tems par le golfe du Mexique et aurait besoin de tous ses moyens. D'ailleurs l'Angleterre, ici bien puissante, emploiera son influence aux États-Unis pour nuire à l'approvisionnement de la Loüisiane. Comme le poste de L'Anse à la graisse<sup>1</sup> est en partie détruit par les eaux et que l'automne dernier, on allait l'évacuer, il faut en transporter les troupes, l'approvisionnement et les munitions à S<sup>t</sup> Loüis, ainsi qu'une partie de la garnison des *Ecoamargot*<sup>2</sup> et les trois galères qui s'y trouvent placées un peu au dessus du Missouri et vis-à-vis de l'embouchure des Illinois pour arrêter tout ce qui pourrait descendre par cette rivière ou du haut Mississippi, avec ordre dans le cas où elles seraient forcées, d'aller s'emboisser sous le fort S<sup>t</sup> Loüis.

On doit faire occuper les postes intermédiaires par les sauvages ; bien disposés, ils rempliront les vides et empêcheront les Américains d'en prendre possession tant que la guerre durera. Je pense même que les

<sup>1</sup> New Madrid.

<sup>2</sup> Écores à Margot, Chickasaw Bluffs, Memphis, Tennessee. See REVIEW, II, 480 ; *Writings of Jefferson* (Ford's ed.), VI, 335-336.

postes New-Gales<sup>1</sup> et des Arkansas doivent être ramenés à S<sup>t</sup> Loüis où leur garnison serait de la plus grande utilité ; d'ailleurs politiquement parlant, je le[s] trouve beaucoup mieux entre les mains des sauvages.

Par cette disposition, le gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Orléans, au lieu de se dégarnir, pourra renforcer les postes de la Nouvelle-Orléans, *Bâton-Rouge, Silenque-Mines*<sup>2</sup> et autres avec les milices des Natchèses (la plus part des habitans des Natchèses est composé d'anciens *Tysdesers-unis*,<sup>3</sup> dévoués aux Anglais), de la pointe-coupée<sup>4</sup> et des Carolines. Quant aux Florides, la Havane doit leur fournir des secours.

Mais pour opérer un effet moral plus puissant, rallier beaucoup d'opinions, déterminer toutes les nations sauvages si nombreuses dans cette partie à s'armer, contre les Anglais, enchaîner les Américains des États de l'ouest et nord-ouest, faire prononcer les Canadiens des Lacs, il faudrait des Français ; le plus petit corps de troupes de la République non seulement sauverait cette colonie de l'ennemi commun, mais encore mettrait Sa Majesté Catholique à même de porter bientôt la guerre dans le cœur du Canada. Ce n'est pas ici jactance, orgueil national, c'est la vérité extraite de ce que j'ai vu, entendu et observé dans la reconnaissance que j'ai faite de ces contrées. Mais le tems presse, l'ennemi est à la porte, les grandes autorités sont éloignées, cette idée ne peut servir que pour l'avenir. Peut-être serait-il possible de suppléer momentanément à ces grands obstacles en faisant lever au nom de la France dans la haute Loüisiane un corps de Canadiens ; j'indiquerai la forme et le lieu du rassemblement. Cette union des deux nations serait d'un grand poids et suffirait peut-être pour suspendre l'expédition des Anglais, dans le doute où ils seraient de savoir quelle part les États de l'ouest pourraient prendre à cette guerre.

Je prie le ministre de peser dans sa sagesse cette note écrite à la hâte et trop peu développée, mais qui renferme des vérités qui feront peut-être époque un jour ; car la perte de la Loüisiane dans la situation où se trouvent la France et l'Espagne vis-à-vis des États-Unis, serait un des coups les plus funestes aux deux puissances alliées. On doit donc tout faire pour la sauver.<sup>5</sup>

Pour copie conforme  
Signé P. A. ADET.

#### IV. GENERAL COLLOT TO CHEVALIER DE YRUJO.<sup>6</sup>

Deuxième note remise au ministre d'Espagne par le général Collot, pour servir de réponse aux différentes questions qui lui ont été adressées par ce ministre par sa lettre en date du 1<sup>er</sup> mars 1797.

Dans la première note que j'ai eu l'honneur de remettre au ministre d'Espagne, je crois lui avoir suffisamment démontre quelle était l'importance de la plan de S<sup>t</sup> Louis.

<sup>1</sup> Nogales, Walnut Hills, Vicksburg.

<sup>2</sup> Plaquemines ?

<sup>3</sup> United Tory deserters ?

<sup>4</sup> Pointe Coupée, Louisiana.

<sup>5</sup> Compare Carondelet's plan of defense, 1794, in the REVIEW, II, 474-505.

<sup>6</sup> Affaires Étrangères, États-Unis Correspondance, vol. 47, folios 130-131.

Il ne me reste plus pour répondre aux différentes questions insérées dans sa lettre en date du 1<sup>er</sup> mars 1797, qu'à lui faire connaître que la conservation de cette place (d'après sa situation topographique) dépend autant de ses soins que de ceux du gouverneur général de la Louisiane.

On ne peut révoquer en doute que toutes les fois qu'une puissance est en guerre avec une autre, le premier soin d'un fonctionnaire public est de mettre en état de défense toutes les parties sous la domination de son souverain *appelées extrêmes frontières*, sans attendre même qu'elles soient menacées, il suffit seulement qu'elles puissent l'être d'un instant à l'autre pour justifier cette sage précaution.

S<sup>t</sup> Louis est l'extrême frontière de la haute Louisiane relativement au Canada, puisque c'est à compter du Missouri que finissent les derniers établissements formés sur le territoire de Sa Majesté Catholique dans la haute Louisiane.

La paix même ne serait pas une excuse suffisante pour ne pas mettre cette place en état de défense, puis qu'elle doit protéger par la suite du tems le commerce de ces immenses contrées, arrêter tous les envahissements et violations de territoire de la part des Anglais, qui se sont déjà emparé[s] de la partie la plus précieuse appartenante à Sa Majesté Catholique, parce qu'ils n'ont rien trouvé qui s'y soit opposé, ainsi que je l'ai fait connaître au ministre d'Espagne, lorsque je lui ai rendu compte de mon voyage.

Que c'est de S<sup>t</sup> Louis que doivent être répartis tous les différents postes que Sa Majesté Catholique sera obligée de faire établir *sur les limites projetées* entre le Canada et la Louisiane, et empêcher par là les empiétements auxquels les lignes de démarcation imaginaires ne fournissent que trop de prétextes aux puissances ambitieuses et de mauvaise foi.

Mais comme le ministre d'Espagne pourrait m'objecter que ces soins devraient naturellement appartenir au gouverneur de la Louisiane, je lui observerai que, quels que soient les talents et l'activité bien connus de M<sup>r</sup> le Baron de Carondelet, il lui est impossible de porter des secours et d'approvisionner la place de S<sup>t</sup> Louis avec la même facilité et la même célérité que le ministre d'Espagne en a le pouvoir par la voie de Philadelphie, parce qu'il faut deux mois et demi de la Nouvelle-Orléans pour aller à S<sup>t</sup> Louis et qu'un seul suffit pour s'y rendre de l'État de Kentucky ; que les farines à la Nouvelle-Orléans coûtaient à mon départ 20 et 24 piastres, tandis qu'elles n'en coûtent que 5 et 6 dans les États de l'ouest. Il y a donc pour Sa Majesté Catholique économie de tems et de dépense extrêmement précieuse.

À l'égard de mon opinion sur la nécessité d'envoyer d'ici un officier du génie dans la haute Louisiane, elle est fondée sur ce que cette province en est totalement dépourvue ; que d'ailleurs l'officier que le ministre d'Espagne dépêchera d'ici doit selon tous les calculs des distances être rendu à S<sup>t</sup> Louis 6 semaines ou 2 mois avant celui que l'on pourrait tirer de la Havane.

C'est par cette même raison que je n'hésite pas à me rendre à la

demande que m'a faite le ministre d'Espagne de lui communiquer ce que je pense qu'il seroit raisonnable de faire pour mettre la place de St. Louis à l'abri d'un coup de main.<sup>1</sup>

Il trouvera, dans le projet que j'ai l'honneur de luy adresser cy-joint, ce que je pense à ce sujet, bien entendu qu'il sera soumis à l'examen de M. le Baron de Carondelet, afin qu'il puisse y faire tous les changemens, les corrections et additions qu'il croira justes et nécessaires.

Fait à PHILADELPHIE, le 9 mars 1797, (V. S.)

Signé, V. COLLOT.

Pour copie conforme

P. A. ADET.

V. ROBERT LISTON TO LORD GRENVILLE.<sup>2</sup>

PHILADELPHIA 16 March 1797

*My Lord*

The Bearer of this Letter is M<sup>r</sup> Chisholm the Gentleman mentioned in my Letters No 2 and 3 as having been charged by certain Persons inhabiting near the South West Frontiers of the United States, to propose a Plan for the Conquest of the Floridas

He has lately received Letters from some of the Adventurers who wish the most ardently to engage in the Enterprize representing in such lively Colours the facility of its Execution and the Certainty of Success at the same Time urging him so strongly to bring the Business to a conclusion before he returns among them that he felt himself irresistibly impelled to make a Voyage to Europe in order to Explain his Views to His Majesty's Ministers and to obtain a definite answer on the subject before the Season be too far advanced.

M<sup>r</sup> Chisholm's Correspondents appear to have given him an account of the Dispositions of the Inhabitants of the Spanish Territories adjoining to the United States that has persuaded him of the possibility of joining to the Acquisition of Florida the Reduction of the Forts on the Mississipi, the Conquest of New Mexico, and a Diversion that might ultimately contribute to the Independence of South America, if that were considered as a Measure essential to the Interests of Great Britain

The Certainty which the last accounts from Europe convey of the farther Continuance of the War, the Probability of the Cession of Louisiana to the French by the Spaniards, and the serious consequences that must attend it, together with the Advantages which might accrue to His Majesty's Interests from even a temporary possession of that Country are Considerations that struck me as being of such Importance as to render it improper for me to discourage the Idea of his Voyage. I have therefore consented to M<sup>r</sup> Chisholm's Proposal and have paid his Passage to England,<sup>3</sup> giving him hopes at the same time that the Expences of his

<sup>1</sup> See Collot's plan for fortifying St. Louis in his *Journey in North America*, I, 249-252, 257-264.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, America 18.

<sup>3</sup> See number VII, note 3, p. 584.

Stay in London, and of his Return to this Country will be defrayed by His Majesty's Government provided the amount does not exceed the Sum of One Hundred and Fifty pounds. The charge of the whole Expedition as stated by him is so very inconsiderable and the Risk seems to come so little home to Great Britain that there appears to be hardly any objection to making the Experiment except the possibility of being imposed upon by Characters of which it is not easy to obtain a competent knowledge. But this danger might in a great degree be obviated by sending one or two Persons of Consequence to direct the operations and control the Disbursements

I shall take the first safe opportunity of mentioning further particulars of the plan of operations in Question and shall content myself at present with suggesting that although any apparent Infraction of the Neutrality of the United States might be avoided by the Proposal of Captain Chisholm that the Adventurers (who have never become Citizens of America) should all pass over to the Spanish Territory, before they begin their Military Preparations, yet there are solid Reasons against complying with the proposed Invitation to the Indian Tribes to join the King's Standard, since by the Treaty between the United States and Spain, it is expressly stipulated that the Contracting Parties shall reciprocally prevent the Commission of Hostilities by the Indians settled within their respective Boundaries, and even use Force for that Purpose if it should be found necessary. This Difficulty can hardly be otherwise done away than by a Rupture between France and America, which might also involve His Catholic Majesty and of course annul the Treaty alluded to But there is Reason to think that the Assistance of the Indians is not absolutely necessary to the Success of the Enterprize.

As It is not unlikely that this Dispatch may be prevented from reaching your Lordship's hands I have furnished the Bearer with ostensible Letters of Recommendation to M<sup>r</sup> Hammond, but so expressed as to conceal the real object of his journey.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect

My Lord, Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant  
R<sup>r</sup> Honbl<sup>r</sup> Lord Grenville

ROB. LISTON

VI. ROBERT LISTON TO [GEORGE HAMMOND ? ].<sup>1</sup>

PHILADELPHIA 16 March 1797

Dear Sir

The bearer, M<sup>r</sup> Chisholm is the Gentleman concerning whom I wrote to you in my Letters of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January and 13<sup>th</sup> of last month to which I beg leave to refer you.

He, and his partners and employers have become impatient and he sets out with an intention of Explaining the business and procuring a definitive answer himself.

Should he be disappointed at Hamburgh, and come to London, I, with perfect confidence deliver him into your hands for every degree of

<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, America 18.

support and assistance he may require. He is likely among other things, to need your aid to put his thoughts into proper stile and shape on paper; for he is more used to *talk* over the praises of Lands, the advantages of their situation and the facility of their improvement than to *write* upon the Subject and our monied monied [sic] men are so much surfeited with eloquent descriptions that they are become fastidious and will not be affected by an artful tale.

I hope you will at all events redispach him soon for America and not allow him to spend money unnecessarily in London. I have desired Moore to supply him with what he may want during his stay but I trust the sum will not be large and I equally trust you will finally reimburse me the whole whatever it be, for my interest compared with that of the great monied men in question is next to nothing.

Captain Williamson who has been once more in town assures me the lands in the Genesee Country are by no means unhealthy when the woods are cut down and cultivation commenced but I still doubt Poor Bob Morris is at length obliged to sell, and has already advertised his magnificent possessions in this Country not excepting the palace in Chesnut Street.

I remain, with perfect truth and regard

My dear Sir

Your most obedient and faithful humble Servant

ROB. LISTON

#### VII. ROBERT LISTON TO JOHN D. CHISHOLM.<sup>1</sup>

Memorandum for M<sup>r</sup> Chisholm —

On arriving at Hamburgh, M<sup>r</sup> Chisholm will call on M<sup>r</sup> Goverts, to whom I have written a Letter,<sup>2</sup> and on M<sup>r</sup> Peyron, the Swedish Minister to whom I also wrote sometime ago, and who is a very excellent Man. — These two Gentlemen will be sufficient for every thing you may want, except for Money, which I know you have taken your measures to procure elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

If you are forced to come to London, I have given you Letters which I hope will suffice for every thing, and even for Money. When you wish to correspond with me, carry your Letters to the *Secretary of States Office Downing Street Westminster*, at the beginning of a month; at other times write by Ship.

R. L

<sup>1</sup> Department of State, Bureau of Indexes and Archives, Despatches, England, volume 5. Headed, " — Copy — [the original in the possession of R King]".

<sup>2</sup> This letter to J. H. Goverts, introducing Chisholm, was given by Chisholm to King, and is printed in King, *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II, 198.

<sup>3</sup> Pickering in a letter to the committee of impeachment says that Liston confessed to him to have paid the passage for Chisholm and also to have given him a draft on his own banker in London for £20. Thus it may be technically true that, as Chisholm in his declaration claims, Liston had never advanced him any money (*Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2374; see also King to Secretary of State, August 28, 1797, King, *Correspondence*, II, 217-218). Thomas Davy in a letter to William Davy, dated September 13, 1797, says that Chisholm had tried in vain to borrow from him, and that the British ministry had amply supplied Chisholm with money (*Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2369-2370).

17. March 1797.

P: S the Originals, of which the foregoing are true Copies, are in my Possession, having been delivered to me by J. D Chisholm.

LONDON Dec<sup>r</sup> 9. 1797

RUFUS KING

VIII. GENERAL COLLOT TO CHEVALIER DE YRUJO.<sup>1</sup>

3<sup>ème</sup> Note. adressée au ministre de Sa Majesté Catholique près des États-Unis d'Amérique par le général Collot.

D'après la déposition du S<sup>r</sup> Michel, habitant du Tennessee, il paraît :

1<sup>o</sup> qu'il a été fait par le nommé Chisholm, agent anglais et habitant du Tennessee un enrôlement de 1000 habitans de cette province destinés à attaquer les postes du Bâton-Rouge, de New-Gales et des Écors à Margot appartenant à Sa Majesté Catholique.

2<sup>o</sup> que Chisholm a fait toute la reconnaissance de la Louisiane et des deux Florides, et déterminé les nations Creek et Cherokees à tourner leurs armes contre les possessions espagnoles.

3<sup>o</sup> que Chisholm a obtenu une liste de 1.500 Tories ou loyalistes anglais des Natchez, qui se sont engagés à prendre les armes en faveur des Anglais, dès qu'ils paraîtront pour attaquer la Basse Louisiane et marcher par cette conquête sur S<sup>r</sup> Fé.

4<sup>o</sup> qu'il se forme un rassemblement sur les Lacs dans le Haut-Canada, composé de 500 anglais troupe[s] de ligne, 700 canadiens, milice soldée, et 2000 sauvages des Lacs qui doivent être commandés par le chef indien *Brent*.<sup>2</sup>

5<sup>o</sup> que ce corps doit descendre par la rivière des Illinois, attaquer S<sup>r</sup> Louis, la Nouvelle-Madrid, marcher ensuite sur S<sup>r</sup> Fé en suivant les rivières S<sup>r</sup> François et des Arkansas.

6<sup>o</sup> que Chisholm s'est procuré 6 pièces de canons de campagne, qu'il a déposées sur la rivière du Tennessee entre les mains d'un de ses agens, et que ces pièces sont les mêmes autrefois destinées à l'expédition du citoyen Genet.

7<sup>o</sup> que le rendez-vous des Américains doit avoir lieu à Knoxville dans le Tennessee le 1<sup>er</sup> Juillet.

8<sup>o</sup> qu'en conséquence Chisholm, après avoir ainsi tout disposé, et après avoir fait son rapport au ministre d'Angleterre, M<sup>r</sup> Liston, est parti le 28 de mars pour Londres sur le brig —— destiné pour Hambourg pour faire part de ce projet au gouvernement et demander des vaisseaux et de l'argent pour son exécution.

Le S<sup>r</sup> Michel a déposé en outre qu'une partie des membres du Sénat américain était dans le secret, notamment MM. Bi—, Li—, et Ru—.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Affaires Étrangères, États-Unis Correspondance, volume 47, folios 137-139.

<sup>2</sup> Brant, the celebrated chief.

<sup>3</sup> Blount? Livermore? Rutherford? These names of senators in the Fifth Congress most nearly supply the omissions. The editor has no other reason for the conjecture.

Pour preuve de ce qu'il a avancé, le S<sup>r</sup> Michel a remis une lettre originale signée de Chisholm par laquelle il lui recommande de se trouver à l'époque convenie à — pour agir en conséquence du plan arrêté. Cy-jointe copie de la lettre.<sup>1</sup>

#### OBSERVATIONS

La déposition ci-dessus semble confondre deux projets hostiles contre la Louisiane qui sont également sur le tapis, mais qui n'ont aucune connexion entre eux.

Les Américains de l'ouest et les Anglais, quelque désir qu'ils ayent, les uns et les autres, de chasser les Espagnols de la Louisiane, n'agiront jamais ensemble ; les Américains du Tennessee et du Kentucky sont ennemis jurés de l'Angleterre, et n'aspirent dans ce moment qu'à prendre possession des postes établis sur la rive gauche du Mississippi, reculer toutes les nations sauvages jusqu'au delà du fleuve pour n'avoir plus de guerre indienne à craindre et acquérir de nouvelles terres.

Les Creeks et les Cherokees ont de tout tems été les alliés et les amis de l'Espagne, ainsi que les ennemis déclarés des Américains ; un changement aussi prompt est invraisemblable.

<sup>1</sup> The letter of Chisholm to Mitchell and Major Craig inclosed in this letter of Collot is printed in *Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2399 ; and Collot, *Journey in North America*, II, 67 ; French edition, II, 90.

On Mitchell and Craig see Chisholm's declaration, number XIII, *post*. Mitchell had given information to the Spanish authorities at Natchez in December, 1793, concerning the plot of Genet, *Report of American Historical Association*, 1896, I, 1029. See Mitchell's deposition in *Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2336, 2398-2399.

The text of the letter in the *Journey* varies in minor phraseology and substitutes May for July. Possibly the verbal discrepancies arise from translation. Collot's statement, in his *Journey*, II, 64-68, that he informed Gayoso at Natchez of the circumstantial details of the hostile preparations against Louisiana and that he received Chisholm's letter at that place, is impossible, since the letter bears the date March 17, 1797, and the date of Collot's stay at Natchez was in October, 1796. Collot reached Philadelphia by the beginning of January, 1797, and it was not until February 24 that Adet informed his government that the English meditated an expedition against Upper Louisiana and a descent of the Mississippi. He remarks that he had had conferences in the matter with the Spanish minister, Yrujo. That minister called the attention of the Secretary of State on February 27 to an expedition said to be planned against Spanish territory, and again, on March 2, the Spanish minister briefly mentions the Fox and Wisconsin rivers as the line of attack, and St. Louis and New Madrid as objective points (*American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, II, 68, 87-89). Chisholm was a babbler, and on March 19, according to the testimony in the Blount case, he was " vociferating vehemently amidst a crowd of Frenchmen " at a Philadelphia tavern (*Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2368). Possibly Collot secured his detailed evidence and the Chisholm letter and deposition at this time. Chisholm's date of sailing had been fixed for March 19, but the vessel did not depart until the next day, and Chisholm sent letters back from the Capes, including one to Blount, March 23 (*ibid.*, 2369). The date of Collot's present letter, April 15, 1797, is certainly significant. He may have desired to dignify his western inquiries by antedating this discovery. But see his account of Lorimer's disclosures (*Journey*, II, 11-13), which were probably the basis of his first reports to the French and Spanish ministers. Note the relation of this subject to the retention of the Spanish posts and to Liston's correspondence with Pickering (*American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, II, 20-103, *passim*).

Une partie des habitans des Natchès prendra sans doute volontiers les armes pour les Anglais, mais, royalistes réfugiés de la dernière guerre, ils n'agiront jamais en faveur des Américains.

Je crois fermement qu'il y a un plan de [?] formé par l'Angleterre pour attaquer la Louisiane et que ce plan est secrettement favorisé par un parti aux États-Unis ; mais les deux plans dont parle le S<sup>r</sup> Michel sont très distincts.

Les Américains du Tennessee et du Kentucky veulent avoir les postes occupés par les troupes de Sa Majesté Catholique, mais quand [quant] à présent ils n'attaqueront pas la Louisiane ; ils se battraient plutôt contre l'Angleterre. Ils ne peuvent être soutenus dans l'attaque de ces postes par aucune nation sauvage, excepté par une portion des Chikasaws, et l'on fera tourner aisément contre eux les Natchès.

Les Anglais (ou les compagnies du Canada) veulent la Louisiane et principalement la partie supérieure, pour leur commerce de pelleteries, et ils entraîneront dans cette expédition les Canadiens et les nations sauvages, en leur persuadant que c'est contre l'Espagne seule qu'ils veulent faire la guerre.

Mais mon opinion est que, d'après les mesures sages et fermes prises, il y a plus d'un mois, par le ministre de Sa Majesté Catholique près des États-Unis, en faisant passer un ingénieur à S<sup>r</sup> Louis pour mettre cette place en état de défense, et requérant le gouvernement des États-Unis, de faire respecter son territoire, il est impossible, si le gouvernement fédéral est de bonne foi et fait respecter sa neutralité, que les Anglais puissent attaquer la haute Louisiane avant l'hiver prochain ; ce qui donne à la Cour d' Espagne tout le tems nécessaire pour porter dans cette partie de sa colonie des secours suffisans pour la mettre à l'abri d'une insulte.

A l'égard du second plan d'invasion, désuni dans ses parties, M<sup>r</sup> le gouverneur de la Louisiane est encore à tems de le déconcerter par des mesures promptes, tant en faisant renforcer les peuples menacés, qu'en faisant agir près des sauvages, des Natchès et des Américains de l'ouest, des agens différens, qui sachent faire tourner au profit de Sa Majesté Catholique leurs intérêts divers, et leurs passions très distinctes.

PHILADELPHIE, le 15 avril 1797 (V. S.)

Signé, V. COLLOT.

Pour copie conforme

P. A. ADET.

IX. ROBERT LISTON TO LORD GRENVILLE.<sup>1</sup>

PHILADELPHIA 10 May 1797

*My Lord*

The project suggested by the person mentioned in my letters N° 2, 3, and 8 was of so great importance and on a consideration of the weak and neglected state of the Spanish American Settlements, appeared to be of such easy execution that I thought it my duty not to prevent His Majesty's Ministers from having an opportunity of discussing the subject with a man who (though without education or brilliant talents) seemed to be enterprizing, resolute, and well acquainted with the proposed scene of action.

A circumstance has however since occurred which must add to the difficulty of carrying into effect any plan of the nature of the one in question.

Suspicions have gone abroad which I do not know how to account for, otherwise than by the indiscretion of the proposer — that the Government of Great Britain has actually an intention of attacking the Spanish possessions on the Mississipi. The idea has acquired so great a degree of consistency as to produce a representation on the subject from the Catholic King's Envoy here to the Ministers of the United States and a consequent note from Colonel Pickering to me of which last I have the honour of inclosing a copy. And, partly owing to this alarm, partly to the frequent journies of suspicious Frenchmen into the back settlements of the United States, orders have been sent by the Secretary at War to the Commanding officers of the American Garrisons on the frontiers not to permit any travellers to pass their posts or to frequent those interior parts of the Country (even though they are Citizens of the United States) except those persons who are authorised to do so by Treaty meaning the British Traders from Canada, who have a right to pass and repass freely for the sake of trade.

This regulation, if strictly put in execution, might subject the author of the project himself, were he to return to the South Western Territory, to be refused admission and perhaps to be arrested, and it would be unsafe to trust him with any papers of consequence.

I beg leave therefore to suggest to Your Lordship whether it would not be advisable in the first place to draw from him all the information he is capable of giving and then to send him back to this Country accompanied or followed by a Person in whose talents and integrity our Government could place implicit confidence, who might in the first moment travel without suspicion as a Canadian Merchant, and afterwards act as circumstances might direct.

<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, America 18. Compare Liston's disavowals and admissions in *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, II, 69, 71. Pickering gave Rufus King, our minister to England, an account of Blount's offense July 8 and August 5, 1797 (King, *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II, 196–197, 209–210, incompletely published). Létombe's despatch of July 18, 1797, alleges that two of Liston's letters were subtracted at Pickering's instance from Romayne's papers (*Report of American Historical Association*, 1903, II).

It is proper I should add, however, that reports are current here, and daily gaining credit. — That the French are soon to have possession of Louisiana, and that they are already planning improvements on the fortifications and an increase of the garrisons on the banks of the Mississippi.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect My Lord,  
Your Lordships Most Obedient Humble Servant  
ROB. LISTON

X. ROBERT LISTON TO LORD GRENVILLE.<sup>1</sup>

No. 27

PHILADELPHIA 24<sup>th</sup> June 1797

*My Lord*

I am much concerned that I did not receive Your Lordship's letter N<sup>o</sup>. 6 in time to prevent M<sup>r</sup> Chisholm from setting sail for England. I have only now to request that Your Lordship will have the goodness to let him have his answer without delay and to direct him to return by the first opportunity to America both for the sake of appearances and that he may have no pretence for making claims on me for considerable sums of money for although I made him no promises of any kind yet as he had my consent to undertake the voyage I might not unnaturally find myself incommoded by his importunities on that head, were he to fall into difficulties in consequence of the protraction of his stay in London.

As the representations made to me by the American Secretary of State at the suggestion of the Spanish Minister respecting the pretended preparations on the lakes for an expedition against Upper Louisiana had in the first instance received only a verbal and preliminary answer, the rejection of the plan in question upon motives so liberal and so friendly to the United States as those alleged in Your Lordship's dispatch afforded me the means of giving Colonel Pickering an official and definitive reply I put into his hands the note I have the honour to enclose, with which he appeared to be satisfied and I hope the conversation we afterwards had on the subject will prevent him from making a disclosure which appeared to have been hastily resolved on by the American Government and which might be attended with consequences in some measure unfavourable to the cause of Great Britain without producing any real advantage to the administration of this Country.

It seems that some of the persons engaged in the project proposed to me, and communicated to Your Lordship, had been sufficiently imprudent either in consequence of intoxication, or by want of caution respecting their correspondence, to put it in the power of the American Ministers to get possession of proofs that there existed some plan of an expedition towards the Mississippi which was to originate in the Territories of the United States. The indications which had been discovered led to think that the enterprize was to be patronized by England. But Colonel Pickering has of late been so much accustomed to consider it as a fixed point that the French were to obtain possession of Louisiana, and he is

<sup>1</sup> Public Record Office, America 18.

so much persuaded that a measure immediately connected with this change of sovereignty must be an endeavour on the part of the Republick to excite disaffection and rebellion in the South Western Territories of the United States that he considered the attribution of the plan to British Agency or encouragement as a mere pretext to conceal the real springs of the operation. This idea had determined him in his present state of violent animosity against the French, to make a formal communication to the Congress of everything he had discovered; and he was the more fixed in this resolution from the circumstance that a Member of the Senate of the name of Blount (deputed by the State of Tennessee) a man of an active and turbulent character, and unfriendly to the present administration, appeared to be one of the chief promoters of the enterprise.

I have endeavoured to persuade Colonel Pickering and I flatter myself with some degree of success that a promulgation of the business in its present state would by no means be advisable. That it would furnish His Catholick Majesty's officers with a pretext for retaining the posts that were to be delivered up according to the late Treaty. That it would serve to throw an odium (however ill founded) on the British Nation which could be attended with no good effects to the Government of the United States, while on the other hand it would probably be impossible to bring home any serious charge either to French Agents or the American Citizens who were implicated in the plot. That these last might find means to exculpate themselves by pretending that they had only in view the acquisition of rich lands on the banks of the Mississippi, in the event of that Country's being possessed by people of more tolerant and liberal principles than the Spaniards, but that they intended to take no active part without the permission of their own Government which the present conduct of the Spaniards in that quarter gave them reason to suppose would sooner or later be obtained. I added that a public accusation would have the double effect of inviting<sup>1</sup> the principal characters concerned in the plan and of putting them on their guard, whereas, since the American Ministry were now possessed of a clew of discovery, they might by adopting a system of forbearance have it in their power to watch the motions of these men and to prevent all danger.

A few days will determine whether this reasoning has had its desired effect.

I have the honour to be, with greatest Respect My Lord  
Your Lordship's Most Obedient Humble Servant

ROB. LISTON

<sup>1</sup> Inciting?

XI. CHEVALIER DE YRUJO TO TIMOTHY PICKERING.<sup>1</sup>

Mui S<sup>or</sup> mio.

La publicacion que acaba de hacerse del Mensage secreto del Presidente de los Estados Unidos á las dos Camaras del Congreso con motivo del descuvrimento de la Carta del Senador Bloùnt á M<sup>r</sup> Carey, me ha hecho ver con gran sentimiento lo mui fundados que eran mis temores, comunicados á V. S. por mi en varias Cartas desde el principio de Marzo ultimo, acerca de la intencion que los Ingleses tenian de atacar las Posesiones Espanolas en esta parte del Continente, violando el territorio de los Estados Unidos.

La citada Carta del Coronel Bloùnt no dexa la menor duda sobre un projecto tán hostil ; y siendo el Senador Bloùnt no solo Ciudadano de los Estados Unidos, sino Miembro de su Govierno, y habiendo faltado con una conducta tán criminál no solo al Rey de Espana mi Amo sino á los Estados Unidos, debo pedir á V. S., como lo hago ahora del modo mas serio en nombre de S. M., la satisfaccion correspondiente por tán escandaloso delito, imponiendosele toda la pena y castigo que las Leyes del Pays dicten para crímenes semejantes.

Ofrezco á V. S. mis deseos de complacerle, y de que Ntño S<sup>r</sup> gûe su vida m<sup>s</sup> a<sup>s</sup>

PHILADELPHIA 6 de Julio de 1797<sup>2</sup>

Q. B. S. M<sup>r</sup> de V. S.

su mas at<sup>r</sup> y seg<sup>r</sup> Serv<sup>r</sup>

CARLOS M<sup>r</sup>ÍÑZ DE YRUJO

S<sup>r</sup> D<sup>r</sup> Timoteo Pikering —

[*Indorsement:*] Chev. de Yrujo 6 July 1797. rec<sup>d</sup> 7. congratulatory on discovery of Blount's plot, and requesting he may be punished according to the laws of the US.

<sup>1</sup> Department of State, Bureau of Indexes and Archives, Notes to Department, Spain, volume I. In the letter of Pickering to Yrujo, August 8, 1797 Pickering says of this letter: "But it is well known that Mr. Blount was your frequent guest and intimate companion, and that he was on this intimate footing with you during the whole time that you were representing to the Government your suspicions of British expeditions. Yet, after the discovery of the conspiracy was made public, you formally requested the American Government to punish him for so scandalous a crime. But seeing Mr. Blount was a citizen of the United States, and not a subject of Spain, it would have been decent in you to have left him with his own Government without interposing your advice. But especially when you knew that the President had laid his letter before Congress, and the two Houses were deliberating on the modes of punishing him; when the investigation had proceeded so far that a committee of the Senate had reported a resolution to expel Mr. Blount from the Senate, and a committee of the House had reported a resolution that he should be impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors: for you then to interfere was singularly improper; and it was such an ostentatious display of zeal as, under all the known circumstances, suggests more than one interpretation." *Annals of Fifth Congress*, III, 3218.

<sup>2</sup> On July 11 Yrujo wrote again to Pickering; the letter is published *ibid.*, 3154-3162. In writing to Rufus King, August 5, 1797 (letter published in extract in King, *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II, 209-210), Pickering says: "I inclose a letter from the Spanish Minister, the Chevalier de Yrujo to me, dated the 11<sup>th</sup> Ult. His

## (TRANSLATION)

Sir,

The publication lately made of the secret message from the President of the United States to both Houses of Congress on the discovery of the letter from Senator Blount to M<sup>r</sup> Carey, has caused me to feel with great emotion how well founded were my fears communicated to you by my sundry letters from the first of March last relative to the intention which the English had to attack the Spanish possessions in that part of the Continent, by violating the territory of the US.

The said letter from Colonel Blount does not leave the least doubt on so hostile a project ; and Senator Blount being not only a citizen of the US. but a member of its Government, and having failed in so criminal a piece of conduct, not only the King of Spain my master but the US. should request from you,<sup>1</sup> as I now do in the most serious manner in the name of His Majesty, a satisfaction proportioned to so scandalous a crime, by inflicting on him all the pains and punishments which the laws of the Country dictate for such crimes.

Professing my wishes to serve you, and that God may preserve your life many years

I am sir, your most ob<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

CARLOS M. DE YRUJO

PHILA<sup>A</sup> July 6. 1797.

Timothy Pickering Esq<sup>r</sup>

XII. ROLERT LISTON TO [LORD GRENVILLE].<sup>2</sup>

PHILADELPHIA 8 July 1797

My Lord

The *proofs* alluded to in my letter N<sup>o</sup> 27 of the Existence of a plan concerted by certain inhabitants of the United States for an attack on the Spanish territories in North America in favour of Great Britain, con-

statements are as erroneous and his reasoning as feeble, as his stile and expressions are rude and unbecoming a diplomatic Character. My other engagements have been two [*sic*] numerous and too urgent hitherto to write him an answer. Two or three days since I began an examination of it, and shall finish it as soon as more important business will permit. This answer perhaps the President may lay before Congress at the next Session ; and in that case it may be published. [See *Annals of Fifth Congress*, III, 3199-3219, for Pickering to Yrujo, August 8, 1797, his answer to Yrujo's letter of July 11.] The Spanish Minister procured M<sup>r</sup> Bache to print the inclosed pamphlet containing his letter, and also sent it to the Editor of Porcupine's Gazette for publication ; by the time that I had got the original translated. The Editor commented on the letter, and made remarks on the Minister, his Nation, and the King of Spain, in such terms as induced the Minister formally to request a prosecution against him ; which in deference to his Catholic Majesty, the President thought fit to direct."

<sup>1</sup> This passage should of course read, " and having been at fault in a proceeding so criminal not only toward the king of Spain, my master, but also toward the United States, I must ask of you ", etc. A letter of Yrujo to Pickering, May 24, 1797, complains of the inexact translations published by the Department of State, *Annals of Fifth Congress*, III, 3082-3083.

<sup>2</sup> Public Record Office, America 18.

sisted of an intercepted letter written by M<sup>r</sup> William Blount (formerly Governor of the district of Tennessee, and lately elected Senator for that New State) directed to a person of the name of Carey, an Indian interpreter in the pay of the United States residing in the South Western Settlements of this Country

In this letter M<sup>r</sup> Blount unbosoms himself without reserve on the subject of the project suggested to me through Captain Chisholm [(]in which it appears that he expected to sustain a principal part) and he instructs his friend to contribute towards the success of the plan by endeavouring to secure the co-operation of the Indians, and in particular to increase his (Blount's) interest and consequence among them without any regard to the delicacy of the means to be employed.<sup>1</sup>

It was—from the first moment that the matter was mentioned to me—and it still is my opinion that it would have been more consistent with the dignity, the tranquility, and the real interest of the American Government to have suppressed all mention of this discovery—and I had flattered myself that I had brought over Colonel Pickering to the same sentiments. But the business struck the President in a different light. He looked forward to the possible explosion of the plot by other means and to the blame that might eventually fall on him for throwing a veil over a project calculated to favour a nation towards whom his enemies already accuse him of entertaining a culpable partiality. And the administration no doubt thought that the disgrace of a man who had been vehemently opposed to the measures of Government would have some effect in humbling and weakening the democratick party in general. M<sup>r</sup> Adams therefore resolved to communicate the business together with other matters in a confidential message to the two Houses of Congress and to leave them to take such measures on the occasion as they might think expedient.

I have the honour of enclosing a printed Copy of that Message with the documents referred to which relate chiefly to the increasing difficulties that have arisen respecting the surrender of the Spanish posts on the frontiers and to the danger of an Indian war. The letter of Governor Blount is No XVIII the last in the Collection.

The Secretary of State gave me an opportunity by the enclosed correspondence<sup>2</sup> of exculpating myself and the British Government of any degree of blame in this business. I have stated to Colonel Pickering with perfect truth that I had assured the speculators who applied to me here that *I could give no encouragement to the plan*. The fact is that although I did not chuse to take upon me to reject altogether an idea of such importance, and which I believe the United States themselves would have been glad to see carried into execution, if it could have been effected

<sup>1</sup> See the letter in *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, II, 76-77. It is dated April 21, 1797, and was communicated to Congress by the President July 3, 1797.

<sup>2</sup> See *ibid.*, 69-71.

with a rapid success, — yet I felt all the difficulty and danger of the enter-  
prise which I stated to Captain Chisholm with more force than I have ex-  
pressed in my reports on the subject to Your Lordship and it was with  
no small reluctance that I yielded at last to his earnest intreaties to be  
allowed to make a journey to Europe.

The violent partisans of the democratick faction, who have since my  
arrival at Philadelphia observed with regret my anxious endeavour to  
promote a good understanding between Great Britain and America, and  
the degree of success with which they have been attended, were eager, on  
the first indistinct report which was spread respecting this business, to  
aspere my character, and Calumniate my intentions with regard to this  
Country and they shewed an inclination to carry their enmity to all pos-  
sible lengths on the occasion. The explanations I have given appear,  
however to be generally considered as satisfactory and if any unfavour-  
able impression has been made by the first aspect of the affair there is  
reason to hope it will be equally slight and transitory.

It is singular enough that Governor Blount is a man whom I have  
never seen and with whom I have had no communication either direct  
or circuitous. I did not even know till I read his letter that he was one  
of the persons concerned in the plan. M<sup>r</sup> Chisholm used to mention him  
as a man of weight and influence in the back Country whom it would be  
essential to gain but he seemed to doubt the possibility of securing him.

It also appears from Blount's letters that there has been a branch of  
the project with which I have not been acquainted for I have no knowl-  
edge of the *man of consequence* who is said to *have gone to England*.  
At all events it is evident that the idea must now be wholly renounced  
unless the United States should come to a breach with the Court of Spain  
of which indeed there seems to be some degree of probability.

I cannot conclude without observing with regret that there is a degree  
of disingenuity and a disposition to intrigue and chicanery in the con-  
duct of M. Yrujo the Spanish Minister in this Country which is highly  
disagreeable and may become dangerous to us. He has already produced  
in the most formal way a pretended plan for an expedition from Canada  
which never had existence. He now talks with perfect assurance of cer-  
tain offers made by the English to a General Clarke in Georgia, which I  
conceive to be equally destitute of foundation ; and I understand he is  
proceeding to bring forward other heads of accusation more gross and  
equally groundless, which are unfortunately received with pleasure and  
perhaps with sincere belief by the malignant or ill informed supporters  
of the French and Democratick parties in the United Kingdom

I have the honour to be with the greatest Respect

My Lord, Your Lordships, Most Obedient Humble Servant  
ROB. LISTON

XIII. STATEMENT OF CHISHOLM TO RUFUS KING.

The Declaration of John D. Chisholm.<sup>1</sup>

I arrived in New York while the British Army were in possession of it ;—having a Father residing in Charleston South Carolina, I went to him in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy seven. I went from thence a few months after my arrival in Charleston to Savannah in Georgia, remained there a few weeks ; from thence I proceeded to S<sup>t</sup> Augustine, remained there about two weeks, and from thence I proceeded to Pensacola ; there I continued until the Spaniards took possession of the Country, I think in the same year or early in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy eight ; from thence I was obliged to fly to the Indian Country where I found Protection from Alexander M<sup>c</sup>Gillveray and others. I remained in the Creek Nation about three months, then went to the Cherokee Nation, and remained there a few weeks when I got acquainted with one Roach, Harling, and other Indian Traders from the Frontiers of the United States ; with them I came into that part of the Country called then the Settlement of Holstien, now the State of Tennessee, from hence I traded with the Indians and often went to them from the Inhabitants to ask for Prisoners ; in this way I continued till Colonel William Blount was appointed Governor of that State. I established a permanent Home at Knoxville where I was employed by Colonel Blount, the first time was to bring Goods for the Treaty of Holstien, and afterwards to bring the Indians to said Treaty, and continued to act for him on many occasions carrying Indians to and from Philadelphia ; the last time in taking the Indians to Philadelphia, and in the month of November<sup>2</sup> 1796 arrived there — At this period I brought with me to Philadelphia a Petition from British Subjects residing in the Indian Nations, signed by myself and (I think) about twenty five others, requesting to be admitted Citizens of the United States ; this Petition I presented to the Honorable James M<sup>c</sup>Henry Secretary at War who treated it with coolness and said he would refer it to M<sup>r</sup> Hawkins who had been appointed Superintendant of Indian affairs — I had conceived myself entitled to some notice and employment under the United States from the Services I had rendered in consequence of my influence with the

<sup>1</sup> Department of State, Bureau of Indexes and Archives, Despatches, England, volume 5. For Chisholm's personal traits see the evidence in Blount's trial, particularly *Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2357, 2366-2368. "He was a hardy, lusty, brawny, weather-beaten man", given to drink and brag. It is important to read this document in connection with the explanations and additional information in King, *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II, 217-218, 253-258. King's letter of October 31, 1797 (*ibid.*, 236-237), gives an ingenious conjecture of a connection between Romayne, Yrujo, Las Casas, De Moustier, and Blount in a western land speculation. Liston's relation to the Pulteney land speculations in the Genesee country, and Dr. Romayne's connection with Sir William Pulteney are shown by other documents.

<sup>2</sup> According to John Franklin (see *Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2380-2381), Chisholm stopped at George Lesher's tavern, 94 North Second street, Philadelphia, with about twenty-two Cherokee Indians. Rogers and Carey were also there. For particulars see text cited.

Indians, and had very frequent promises from Colonel Blount to that effect. At the time I left the Indian Country with this Petition which was the Twenty first day of September one thousand seven hundred and ninety six, the signers to this Petition, with myself and the principal Chiefs who accompanied me to Philadelphia had come to the determination that in case the same or similar Protection and Encouragement was not given them to that they received under the British Government they had formed a Plan to attack the Spanish Settlements, namely the Province of West Florida and Louisiana : Finding our Prospects not to our wishes in Philadelphia, I applied to M<sup>r</sup> Liston the British Minister (I think about the latter end of November 1796) and laid open to him the plan verbally ; he answered that he would take it into consideration and give me an answer at a given day ; three or four days afterwards I called upon him, according to appointment, and he informed me that he had no Powers to go into a business of this kind ; that he had objections to it on account of the Indians being engaged in it ; that it was objectionable also on account of the neutrality of the United States. — I had frequent interviews with him afterwards in one of which he said that if I would deliver him the Plan he would send it to his own Government. I delivered him the Plan in writing without mentioning any of my American connexions. — I waited for some Months, that is from November till March, when being tired of waiting longer, I determined on coming to England ; this determination I communicated to M<sup>r</sup> Liston<sup>1</sup> and asked him to give me Letters to this Country ; he accordingly gave me Letters to Lord Grenville, M<sup>r</sup> Dundas and M<sup>r</sup> Hammond<sup>2</sup> saying "that the Bearer was the person mentioned in former Letters etc." — this I think was nearly the purport of them which he shewed me before they were sealed ; he also gave me another Letter to some person concerned in the East India Company sealed, which I suppose was of a private nature ; the persons name I do not recollect. — M<sup>r</sup> Liston also gave me a Letter to a M<sup>r</sup> Gavett<sup>3</sup> of Hamburgh at my own instance, in case I was taken by the French to act as a blind or as a Letter of Introduction as occasion might occur.<sup>4</sup> On my arrival in England I delivered the Letters to Lord Grenville, M<sup>r</sup> Dundas and M<sup>r</sup> Hammond at Lord Grenville's Office ; three or four days after this I received a Note from the Secretary of M<sup>r</sup> Dundas requesting me to call at that Office. I called and was informed that I must state my Propositions in writing which I did a few days afterwards and they were in substance nearly the same as those delivered to M<sup>r</sup> Liston with the addition of the many Friends to the Plan, Citizens of the United States, but I did not mention names ; I had a copy of it where I formerly lodged which shall be forthcoming if in my power. — After remaining here about six or eight weeks and calling frequently at

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 2352.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 2368.

<sup>3</sup> J. H. Goverts ; letter in King, *Correspondence*, II, 198.

<sup>4</sup> *Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2367.

Lord Grenville's Office, I was at length informed that the Government declined going into the business<sup>1</sup>; a Draft was delivered me for One hundred Pounds to pay my expences back to America and a Pass (by my Request) which is in the French Language, to return to America. After my arrival in Philadelphia in November One thousand seven hundred and ninety six, I communicated the Plan to Colonel William Blount who immediately agreed to give it all his aid and influence; I saw him frequently afterwards at his House in Chesnut Street and talked with him on the business; I communicated the matter also to a M<sup>r</sup> Ingraham who lodged at the same house with me (Lasher's<sup>2</sup> Tavern N<sup>o</sup> 92 North Second Street) who said he was a British Subject, and through him I was introduced to a certain Lewis Collins<sup>3</sup> a person said to be concerned in the Stages; this last Man as well as the other agreed to give the Plan their assistance, and he (Collins) said that he would go to Boston where he could raise One hundred stout Yankees and would load two Vessels with Provisions and take them round to the Floridas and join me; I then promised him that on those Conditions he should be appointed a Commissary and also have Commissions for himself and his friends; I left him in Philadelphia, and have heard nothing of him or Ingraham since I left Philadelphia I think in the month of January one thousand seven hundred and ninety seven and proceeded to New York in company with Captain John Rodgers formerly a Captain in the British Army, James Cary Indian Interpreter, four Creek and four Cherokee Chiefs, and took up my Lodgings at James Bradleys N<sup>o</sup> 1. Gold Street where I became acquainted with a M<sup>r</sup> Nicholas<sup>4</sup> and a M<sup>r</sup> Morris who I found was a British Subject from Kingston Jamaica, and had gone there on some Mercantile business; Nicholas I think said he was from New Haven; they both approved of the Plan. Morris said that if I succeeded with the British Government, he would assist all in his power by advancing Money on my Drafts in the West Indies or otherwise and Nicholas said that he would assist in providing Vessels to carry ammunition etc<sup>a</sup>; while in New York I also became acquainted with a certain John Mitchell<sup>5</sup> who I understood was a Surveyor and largely concerned in Land Speculations and who I found had a good knowledge of the Country, particularly the Upper Spanish Posts on the Mississippi; this man came to me in Philadelphia and gave me to understand that he had heard from my Friends Morris and Nicholas our Plan. After several interviews in which he pointed out that he could be of material service, I agreed with him that if we succeeded with the British Government he should be commissioned; in one of our interviews he proposed a certain

<sup>1</sup> King, *Correspondence*, II, 218.

<sup>2</sup> Lasher.

<sup>3</sup> Captain Collins of Marblehead, Massachusetts, King, *Correspondence*, II, 255.

<sup>4</sup> A ship-owner of New Haven, who sent vessels to New Orleans, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> See answer to question 19, p. 604. Compare *Report of American Historical Association*, 1896, I, 1027, 1029; King, *Correspondence*, II, 255; Collot, *Journey*, II, 67; and Collot's letter of April 15, 1797, number VIII, *ante*, pp. 585-587.

Major Craig formerly of the American Army, and who I understood lived about thirty or forty miles from Philadelphia (he was a stout man of about Six feet high about forty or perhaps forty five years of age) Mitchell often brought Craig to see me but I always evaded talking with him on the Subject ; however I told Mitchell that as I had confidence in him he might promise to Craig that he should be employed ; about the month of February last a certain Colonel James Orr of the State of Tennessee came to Philadelphia who I had known before and who lodged in the same house with me ; in the course of conversation I informed him of our Plan to which he gave his hearty concurrence, and said that he could procure as many Men in his own State as he pleased and that he could be joined by Colonel Whiteley with a thousand Men from Kentucky *if I said the word*, as they always understood each other.<sup>1</sup> — While I was in the Indian Country in the Summer of ninety six I wrote by direction of the Indian Chiefs Circular Letters respecting the Peace which was expected to take place between them and the United States. Among these were Letters sent to the Kings and Chiefs of the Northern Tribes ; Brandt and Cornplanter arrived too late for the Treaty, accompanied by Captain Johnston, Captain Stedman,<sup>2</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Street (a Member of Assembly for Upper Canada) and a M<sup>r</sup> Joseph Smith<sup>3</sup> Indian Interpreter for the United States (Johnston and Stedman are both from Canada) I communicated to all those Persons, except Smith who we were afraid to trust ; and all agreed to give their aid excepting Cornplanter who observed that as he was now surrounded by White People he wanted to learn his People to live at peace, but if any of his young men chose to follow his Friend, alluding to Brandt he could not prevent them. Afterwards I wrote Brandt and Johnston that I had embarked for England and they should hear from me — I also communicated at Philadelphia the plan to a M<sup>r</sup> John Hilsman a Merchant in Knoxville who had come to Philadelphia (in March last) by him I sent Letters to my friends with the English and Spanish Declarations of war the Treaty between the United States and Spain and said that “ they would hold themselves in readiness till they should see me ” — I sent about fifty of the Declarations under cover to Captain John Rogers who was then with the Cherokee Nation and who was to deliver them to the different Persons who signed the Petition to the Americans mentioned in the first part of this Declaration and whose names as far as I can recollect are John M<sup>r</sup> Daniel, James Lesslie, Joseph Higgins, Robert Grason, John Clark, Daniel M<sup>r</sup> Gillveray, John O’Kelly, William Thompson, Malcolm M<sup>r</sup> Gee, James Kemp (M<sup>r</sup> Daniels’ name was not to the Petition) ; however the Petition which is with the Secretary of war will speak for itself as to Signatures ; but as very many of them knew nothing of our Plan I will mention the names of those who did know it and who

<sup>1</sup> See King, *Correspondence*, II, 255.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

agreed to give their aid—Daniel McGillveray, James Lesslie, Joseph Higgins, Robert Grayson, John Clark, John O'Kelly, William Thompson, Malcolm M<sup>r</sup> Gee, James Kemp, John O'Riety, Francis Lesslie, John Steel; all those persons I have conferred with myself on the business, also with James Colbert—Cap<sup>t</sup> Rodgers who I have already mentioned, informed me that he had mentioned the plan to a certain Spaniard (whose name I do not at present recollect) who had run from the Spanish Garrison at Pensacola and taken refuge among the Indians; he had been employed as a Rider and Interpreter by the Spaniards and spoke all the Indian Languages. — I think his name is Antonio Gomaza or something like it. I have often seen him and we used to call him *Tonio*; however I know him to be the Identical Person who the Spaniards sent into the Indian Country in ninety five with Letters to the Indian Chiefs of the Chicksaws and Choptaws requesting them to make Peace with the Creek Nation; the reason of Rodgers' mentioning their Plan to the Spaniard was I suppose in consequence of his belief that he would now assist them, as he had deserted from the Spaniards, and indeed he agreed to join in it—this Captain Rogers came to Philadelphia with me in November ninety six, as an Interpreter, and was brought at the Instigation of the Dogwere<sup>1</sup> the King of the Creek Nation and myself, and is very friendly to the United States; There also came with me to Philadelphia, Malcolm M<sup>r</sup> Gee formerly British Interpreter and John Pitchlen who were both acquainted with and were to join in the plan—there was a certain person named Cobb who resided at the Natchez who came into the Indian Country, and I have been well informed that he was acquainted with the plan from some quarter. I recollect meeting at Philadelphia with a Person who called himself Blackburn to whom I mentioned the Plan; he said at first that he should have no objection to join in it provided the United States were concerned, but damned the British having any thing to do in it; he was well acquainted with Blount, as he informed me, and afterwards he said to me if you go on with your Plan I intend to join you; he resides in Richmond in Virginia as he said—the last time I saw Colonel Blount was sometime in March last previous to my sailing from America which was the Twenty first day of that month<sup>2</sup>; he said to me that he wanted me to be gone into the Indian Country and mind the business there; that he had been in New York, and while there had communicated with Doctor Romain<sup>3</sup> and that they had agreed to carry

<sup>1</sup> Dog Warrior, of the Natchez?

<sup>2</sup> See *Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2367-2369.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Nicholas Romayne, who figures prominently in the documents printed in connection with the trial of Blount, was in London in March, 1796, where Liston made his acquaintance. Liston gave Pickering an account of his relations with Romayne to show that they were free from an intrigue (Pickering papers, in the Massachusetts Historical Society, Pickering's statement of July 26, 1797, VI, 467; see also VII, 93). There is, however, evidence in the Chatham papers that Romayne had been an agent of the British government. It is probable that additional material exists in the Public Record Office regarding the connection of Liston and Chisholm.

on the plan on a much larger Scale than I had contemplated<sup>1</sup>; and added that if it took place he must be well paid for it, or he must make large sacrifices in America — At the time I held a talk with the Indians in ninety five by directions of Blount there was a French Man there at the same time sent by the Governor of Pensacola (as he said); his name was John Louis Treville or Trevill; I had no conversation with him as I did not speak Spanish or French, and he did not speak English — I arrived in this Country in the Ship John Henderson; there were no other Passengers on board, except a certain Charles Jacob Hetter<sup>2</sup> from Lancaster Pennsylvania and a Woman. I never mentioned the plan to Hetter; he once asked me since I arrived whether I was concerned in a plan with Blount, and brought me the American Papers giving an account of Blounts Conduct — I could be more particular of names and other matters respecting the Spanish Garrisons was I in a situation to have access to my Papers which are in a small Trunk which I left in Philadelphia in the House of M<sup>r</sup> Liston under the care of M<sup>r</sup> Thornton his Secretary — I shall be willing to make Oath when required to the truth of the foregoing and answer any Questions which may be put to me respecting this business, and have made this Declaration in presence of Major David Lenox. — On being asked a question by Major Lenox I answer that in the winter of ninety five I met a person of the name of Fulton<sup>3</sup> (who told me that he was a Colonel of Horse in the French Service) between the Towns of the Creek and the Cherokee Nations, he told me that he had come from France in order to get the Indians Consent for the establishment of a Republic in the Floridas as they the French were to take it or to get it (I don't recollect which) from the Spaniards; as I was friendly to the United States I advised him to leave the Country as soon as possible which I believe he did, as I have not heard of him since; the said Fulton is a tall handsome man, upwards of Six feet high, well mounted and handsomely equipped in every particular, appeared to be about twenty five years of age.

LONDON 29<sup>th</sup> November 1797.

JOHN D CHISHOLM

#### XIV. OUTLINE OF CHISHOLM'S PLAN.

The General Outlines of the Plan referred to in my Declaration of the Twenty ninth day of November one thousand seven hundred and ninety seven, were as follows.<sup>4</sup> —

Brant and his Associates were to be joined at an agreed point on the Ohio by Mitchell and Craig with such men as they should have collected on the Frontiers of New York and Pennsylvania — this Party were to at-

<sup>1</sup> *Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2356–2355, especially the important conversation on p. 2358.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Jacob Hetter; see *ibid.*, 2367; King, *Correspondence*, II, 217–218.

<sup>3</sup> AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW, X, 270.

<sup>4</sup> Compare Collot's letter of April 15, 1797, number VIII, *ante*, and *Journey*, II, 65–66, and George Rogers Clark's letter of March 2, 1797 (Baron Marc de Villiers du Terrage, *Les Dernières Années de la Louisiane Française*, 362–363).

tack New Madrid, leave a Garrison in it, and proceed to the Head of the Red River and take possession of the Silver Mines. Mitchell and Craig with their Associates were to descend the Ohio in the character of Traders.

The People of Tennessee, Whitley's Men from Kentucky, with those of the Natchez and the Choctaws were to attack New Orleans; no precise arrangement was made concerning the Command of this Party; but I suppose it would be headed by Blount.

The Cherokees and Creeks with the white men of Florida, who were to join, were, under my Command, to take Pensacola; the attack on New Madrid, New Orleans and Pensacola to be made on the same day.

We made no arrangement concerning East Florida, conceiving that it would fall of course after we had obtained Possession of West Florida.

My demand of Great Britain was their Countenance of my Plan and a moderate advance of money; — that a naval force of Six frigates should be sent to block up the Harbour of Pensacola,<sup>1</sup> and the Mouth of the Mississippi; that British Commissions should be given to me and the Persons engaged in the expedition; — in case of success that the Floridas with Louisiana should be put upon the antient footing of a British Colony; — that I should be employed as the British Superintendant of Indian affairs; that public money and personal property should be equally divided between the Crown and the Captors; — that each private Soldier should receive from the Crown a grant of a thousand acres of Land; that Pensacola and New Orleans should be declared free Ports, and the navigation of Mississippi should for ever remain free to the People of Great Britain, and the United States. — We had no intention of attacking the Spanish Ports within the Territory of the United States. —

JOHN D CHISHOLM

#### XV. REPORT OF EXAMINATION OF CHISHOLM BY RUFUS KING.

Questions proposed by Rufus King and Answered by John D. Chisholm, — at the House and in the presence of Major David Lenox, on the Fifth day of December one thousand seven hundred and ninety seven.

Question 1<sup>st</sup>. Did you communicate your plan to Blount before or after communicating it to Liston; if before was Blount privy to your communication of it to Liston?

Answer. I communicated the Plan first to Blount — Soon after I came to Philadelphia I told him that unless I succeeded as to myself and friends in our Expectations from the United States which I communicated to him that we had resolved to apply to the British Government to which Blount answered that we were perfectly right. — After I found that my Petition delivered to the Secretary of War was coldly received I informed Blount of my determination to apply to M<sup>r</sup> Liston which he approved and agreed to support the Plan.

<sup>1</sup> Létombe, July 18, 1797, takes it as being generally known that Admiral Reckett, who was just then cruising at the mouth of the Mississippi, would lead the attack in the south, while General Simcoe would be at the head of operations in the north.

Question 2. Was Blount present at any Conference between you and Liston?

Answer. No, he never was present at any such Conference; it was not my practice on any occasion to converse concerning my Plan with two Persons at the same time — No person was ever present at any Conference between me and Liston.

Question 3. In what manner did Liston receive your Plan?

Answer. He objected to it on two grounds; one that it proposed the Employment of the Indians, and the other that it might affect the neutrality of the United States.

Question 4. Did you inform Liston that Blount was privy to or engaged in the Plan?

Answer. I never named Blount or any other Citizen of the United States to Liston; but I gave him to understand that some persons in Office under them would support and join in the Plan.

Question 5. What part did you suppose the Government of the United States would take in case your plan was attempted?

Answer. I supposed that they would talk, but not act, against us.

Question 6. Had you any expectation of support from any other person besides Blount in the Government of the United States?

Answer. I thought it probable, tho' I never had any conversation upon the Subject with any Member of Congress except Blount, that some of the Members who owned Lands on the Western Waters, would favor my plan — I founded this opinion on the belief that they would follow their interest which would be advanced by clearing the navigation of the Mississippi, and making New Orleans and Pensacola free Ports; — these points, being part of my plan, we supposed would influence the Frontier People to join us.

Question 7. Do you know whether Blount communicated the Plan to any person except Romaine?

Answer. I do not know that he did; he once said to me that he must be well paid by the British and added that if his Brothers knew the plan they would forsake him for ever. My conversations with Blount were always private, and without witnesses; but he one day sent his little Son to ask me to come to his House in the Evening. — On my coming into the room instead of finding him alone as usual I found M<sup>r</sup> Jefferson and General Wilkinson at Table with him (it being after Dinner) It immediately struck me, but I might have been wrong, that Blount had sent for me in order to open my Plan to these Gentlemen — this I did not incline to do, and after sitting a few Minutes, made an excuse to go away by saying that I had an appointment with the Secretary of War; and tho' Blount urged me to stay I went away.

Question 8. What objection had you to have opened your Plan to M<sup>r</sup> Jefferson and General Wilkinson, had Blount desired it?

Answer. As both these Characters were in high Offices, I did not know but Blount might intend to entrap me, and I therefore determined

in case he wished them to know the plan, that he should disclose it himself.

Question 9. Had you any expectation of assistance from any Officer in the American Army?

Answer. No, — I sought on several occasions to sound some of the Officers who were in Philadelphia, but I never found an opening to mention my Plan to any one of them.

Question 10. Did Orr, named in the Declaration, know that Blount was engaged in the plan?

Answer. He might have known it from Blount, but did not from me.

Question 11. What was the object of your Journey to New York?

Answer. Merely to gratify the Indians, who desired to see the other City, and who had also heard that they could obtain there better wampum than at Philadelphia.

Question 12. What was the Object of the Circular Letters to the Northern Indians?

Answer. To invite them to attend at Philadelphia to witness the Peace; and in case we concluded to undertake my Plan, to engage them to co-operate.

Question 13. Did you communicate the Plan to the Indians sent from the several Tribes to meet you at Philadelphia, and if so did they engage to join you?

Answer. I did communicate it to them all, and they all, except the Corn Planter, engaged to join us.

Question 14. Did Liston know that Brandt and his Canada Associates were consulted, and that they had engaged?

Answer. I never mentioned it to Liston, nor do I know that he knew it — Brant was with Liston more than once, but I do not know what passed on these occasions.

Question 15. Had Brant and his Associates arrived at Philadelphia before you went to New York?

Answer. No. They had not arrived.

Question 16. By whom and how did you send your Letters from New York to Brant?

Answer. By a man whose name was Cozins or Cummins who knew nothing of my Plan nor of the Contents of my Letters, but who being bound to Canada engaged to forward my Letters from Albany.

Question 17. Had Blount any knowledge of your intention to come to England?

Answer. I had suspected and especially after Blount had told me that he and Romaine had agreed to carry on the Plan on a much larger Scale, that Blount wished to throw me aside. I therefore did not let him know of my determination to come to England.<sup>1</sup>

Question 18. Did you ever see or converse with Romayne?

<sup>1</sup> See *Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2359; *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, II, 76.

Answer I knew Romayne four years ago in New York, and then conversed much with him, and at his request gave him a Description which he wrote down of the Western Country with which I was acquainted. — I saw him when I was last at New York, but I never conversed with him respecting my Plan

Question 19. Was Mitchell, with whom you became acquainted at New York, named *John*?

Answer He told me his name was John — he was a New England man who was a Surveyor, and had been at New Orleans.

Question 20. Did you know d'Yrujo the Spanish Minister?

Answer. Yes. I did know him.

Question 21. Where did you ever meet him?

Answer. At Kidds, a Lodging House near the President's, where I went to see M<sup>r</sup> Blackburn mentioned in my Declaration.

Question 22. Had D'Yrujo any knowledge of your Plan?

Answer. I do not know that he had.

Question 23. Had you no fears that he would discover it?

Answer. No, for I did not think much of his understanding.

Question 24. Had you any intention to ask the assistance of the French; or had you any reason to think that your Plan was known by the French agents in America?

Answer. I never intended to have any thing to do with the French, and I have no reason to believe that they knew any thing about the Plan.

Question 25. What part did you suppose the people of Georgia and South Carolina would take in regard to your Plan?

Answer. I supposed that the Frontier People would generally join in.

Quest<sup>n</sup> 26. Was Blount privy to your engaging Brant and the Canadians? — Did he ever see Brant or Street?

Answer. At Blounts request I one Evening carried Brant and the Corn Planter to his House, but we did not speak of our plan. Blount knew from me that Brant and his Associates were engaged in the Plan.

Question 27. What has been your Treatment in England?

Answer. I brought Letters to M<sup>r</sup> Dundas and Lord Grenville and M<sup>r</sup> Hammond and M<sup>r</sup> Moor — I have never seen either Lord Grenville or M<sup>r</sup> Dundas.—After going to Lord Grenvilles Office many times, I was finally informed by Moor one of his Clerks that the British Government would not adopt my Plan, and that Lord Grenville had ordered me to be paid One hundred Pounds to enable me to return. I said I had expended Two thousand five Hundred Dollars, and that the One Hundred Pounds would not get me home again — Moor replied that that was all he had been authorized to pay me — I said then it must be so — After this Conversation M<sup>r</sup> Moor sent me Twenty five Pounds more.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2369-2370; King, *Correspondence*, II 216-218, 253-256.

Question 28.— Have you been able to recover the copy of the Plan mentioned in your declaration as having been given in by you to the British Government?

Answer. No, The person in whose hands I left it, destroyed it upon the Publication in the English Papers of Blounts Letter to Carey.

Question 29. Did Liston encourage your coming to England or advance you money for your passage?

Answer. He advised me to wait till he received an answer, but finding me resolved on coming to England he consented, but he never advanced to me any money

JOHN D CHISHOLM

XVI. AFFIDAVIT OF RUFUS KING.

LONDON December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1797.—This Day John D. Chisholm made Solemn Oath to the truth of the foregoing, Declaration, dated the twenty ninth day of November one thousand seven hundred and ninety seven ; to the truth of the Paper called the General Outlines of his Plan ; and likewise to the truth of the Answers by him made to the foregoing Twenty nine Interrogatories, all which are by him Subscribed with his name, Before me

RUFUS KING Min. plenip. of the U S. of Amer: to Great-Britain

XVII. ROBERT LISTON TO LORD GRENVILLE.<sup>1</sup>

PHILADELPHIA 5 December 1797

[Extract.]

The Committee of the House of Representatives appointed towards the close of the last Session to draw up articles of impeachment against M<sup>r</sup> Blount and to call for persons, papers, and records made their report yesterday, which with the documents accompanying it has been read in the House and is ordered to be printed. Although the report with the accompanying papers is voluminous, little additional light has been thrown upon this transaction, and as the plans of the parties concerned were never brought into action it is not probable that any further discoveries can be made

From the beginning it appears that M. de Yrujo has been indefatigable in his exertions to discover any circumstances which might serve to implicate His Majesty's Minister or the American Secretary of State, and he has not only on several occasions sent persons to the Committee (whose evidence has been contradicted in the most essential particulars) but he has corresponded (and sometimes there is room to suspect anonymously) with that body.

Whatever may be his motives of personal resentment against M<sup>r</sup> Liston (it is not difficult to find the causes of his animosity and revenge against Colonel Pickering) his efforts have been totally without effect. And I humbly beg leave to offer to Your Lordship my opinion that (put-

<sup>1</sup> No. 56, Public Record Office, America 18.

ting out of the question the impossibility of bringing any charge against M<sup>r</sup> Liston) this is to be in a great degree ascribed to his frank and well timed communication to the Secretary of State. Every circumstance which however innocent in itself, might if left to the common course of discovery have been considered as decisive proof, had been so happily anticipated by him that Colonel Pickering's opinion of his sincerity was unchangeably fixed and the views of those members of the Committee whose democratic principles might dispose them to triumph in any discovery of this kind, were compleatly defeated.

It is not much to be apprehended that these communications which the circumstances of the time and the country rendered necessary will be drawn into precedent on any future occasion and although Colonel Pickering by confessing the delicacy of the question he was about to put made an implied acknowledgement that an answer might be refused with propriety, yet M<sup>r</sup> Liston has omitted no opportunity of impressing this observation on his mind

XVIII. EDWARD THORNTON TO LORD GRENVILLE.<sup>1</sup>

PHILADELPHIA 28 December 1797

*My Lord*

M<sup>r</sup> Liston not having yet returned from his excursion to the Southward, I have the honour of transmitting to your Lordship a printed copy of the report with the accompanying documents of the Committee appointed to prepare articles of impeachment against M<sup>r</sup> Blount. It is probable that the business will rest here as M<sup>r</sup> Blount has not made his appearance conformably to the recognizances into which he was obliged to enter at the conclusion of the late Session, and it seems the general opinion that no prosecution can be carried on against him in his absence.

The letter of General Clarke<sup>2</sup> to the Spanish Consul at Charleston is perhaps the only material part of this report with which your Lordship has not already been acquainted, and it is probable that M<sup>r</sup> Liston during his stay in the South may be able to throw some light upon the propositions which General Clarke pretends to have confidentially made to him through some British Agent.

I have the honour to be with the greatest respect

My Lord, Your Lordship's most obedient Humble Servant

EDW<sup>D</sup> THORNTON

<sup>1</sup> No. 57, Public Record Office, America 18.

<sup>2</sup> See *Annals of Fifth Congress*, II, 2404, 2413.